

А. И. Радьковская

НЕВЕРБАЛЬНАЯ КОММУНИКАЦИЯ В ЗДРАВООХРАНЕНИИ

Научный руководитель: ст. преп. И. Ю. Абедковская

Кафедра иностранных языков

Белорусский государственный медицинский университет, г. Минск

***Резюме.** В статье рассматривается важность невербальной коммуникации в здравоохранении. Работа содержит результаты опросов студентов Белорусского государственного медицинского университета, пациентов и врачей поликлиник и больниц города Минска. Результаты исследования будут полезны для оценки качества медицинского обслуживания и характера взаимодействия между врачом и пациентом во время медицинской консультации.*

***Ключевые слова:** невербальная коммуникация, здравоохранение, взаимодействие врач-пациент, качество медицинского обслуживания.*

***Resume.** The article describes the research held to study the importance of non-verbal communication in healthcare. It contains information about the results of surveys conducted in Belarusian State Medical University and out-patient clinics and hospitals of Minsk. The findings of the research will be useful in assessing physician-patient interaction during a medical consultation and its quality.*

Keywords: *non-verbal communication, healthcare, physician-patient interaction, quality of medical consultation.*

Topicality. Good communication is the foundation of any successful relationship. The ability to understand and use nonverbal communication, or body language, is a powerful tool that can help people connect with each other, express what they really mean, and build better relationships. Healthcare professionals should be able to read a number of nonverbal cues to gain a greater understanding of their patients' feelings and needs, demonstrate their attention to the patients because when interacting with others we continuously give and receive wordless signals. Medical professionals should pay close attention to micro-expressions, the quick, almost imperceptible facial expressions that people might make when hiding their emotions.

Objective: to prove the importance of non-verbal communication for medical professionals.

Tasks:

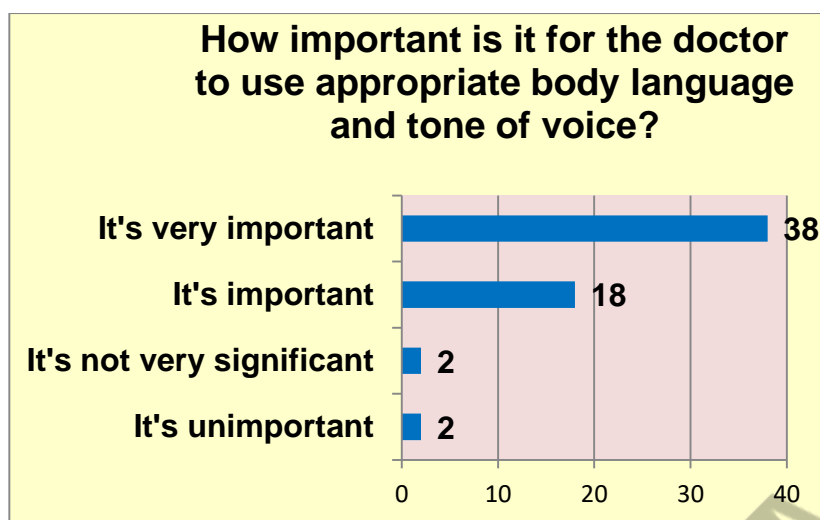
1. To conduct a survey in out-patient clinics and hospitals in Minsk in order to analyze the efficiency of physician-patient interaction and the patients' satisfaction after medical consultations.

2. To study the use of non-verbal communication by the students of Belarusian State Medical University.

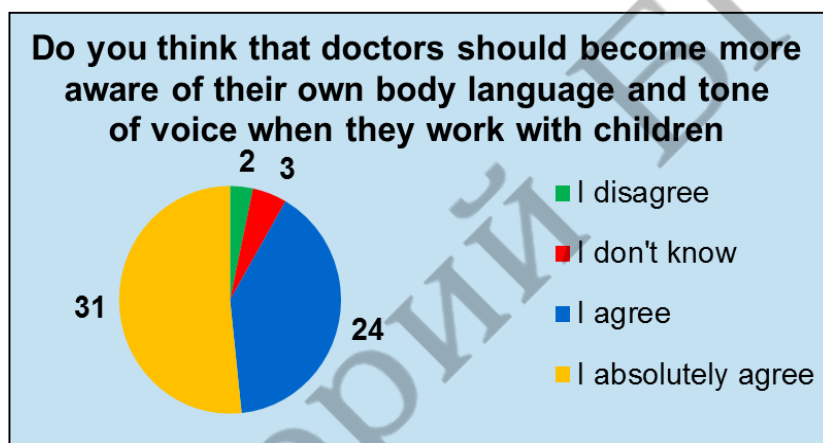
Material and methods.

In the course of our research we studied the topical literature and developed 3 questionnaires. We revealed the level of students' knowledge of non-verbal communication and the frequency with which they use non-verbal communication techniques. Then we questioned patients in out-patient clinics and assessed their preferences for touch and eye contact during medical consultations. We also got information about patients' satisfaction and physician-patient interaction during medical consultations. It helped to assess the agreement between doctors and patients during consultations. The respondents' participation was voluntary and confidential. The patients were asked to complete the questionnaire in the waiting room directly after the consultation. In the patient's absence, the physician completed a similar questionnaire. The interaction was measured by assessing the differences between the physicians' and the patients' opinions.

Results and discussion. The study revealed a high level of knowledge of non-verbal communication and gave information about its use by the students of Belarusian State Medical University on a daily basis. 56 of 60 students (93%) agree that it's important to know the means of non-verbal communication and note the importance of body language and tone of the doctor's voice for successful communication with patients (picture 1). 92 % (55 students) think that doctors should become more aware of their own body language and the necessity of using a special tone of voice when they work with children in order to contact with them more efficiently, and hence, make them communicate their complaints easily (picture 2).



Picture 1 - The importance of body language and tone of voice for the profession of the doctor



Picture 2 - Awareness of body language and tone of voice while working with children

Approximately 40-60 % of students are aware of the tone of their voice, establish an eye contact with interlocutor and use hand gestures and various facial expressions regularly while communicating with each other (table 1).

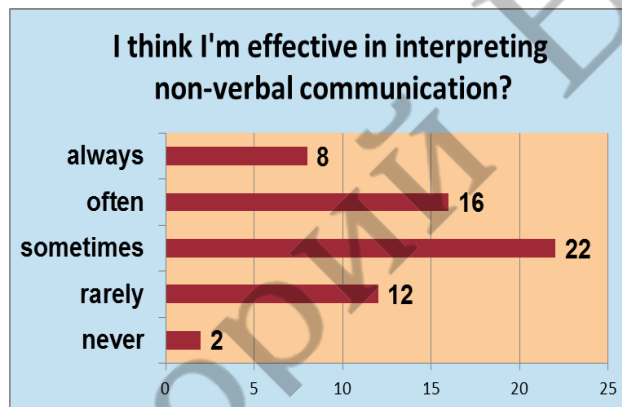
Statements	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I use hand gestures.	15 (25%)	17 (28.3%)	18 (30%)	8 (13.3%)	2 (3.3%)
I'm aware of the tone of my voice.	10 (16.7%)	16 (26.7%)	24 (40%)	10 (17%)	-
I establish an eye contact with interlocutor.	17 (28.3%)	21 (35%)	15 (25%)	7 (11.7%)	-
I try to use various facial expressions.	7 (11.7%)	15 (25%)	25 (41.7%)	9 (15%)	4 (6.6%)
I think I'm effective in using non-verbal communication.	15 (25%)	20 (33.3%)	19 (31.7%)	3 (3.3%)	3 (5%)
I think I'm effective in interpreting non-verbal communication.	8 (13.3%)	16 (26.7%)	22 (36.6%)	12 (20%)	2 (3.3%)

Table 1. The use of non-verbal communication by the students of BSMU

54 students (90%) think they are effective in using non-verbal communication (picture 3), 46 students (77%) think they are effective in interpreting non-verbal communication (picture 4).

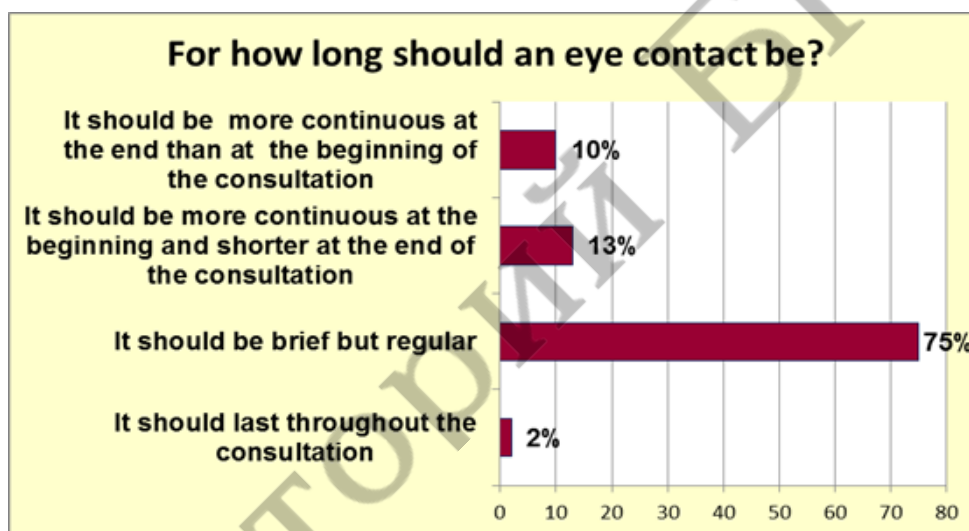


Picture 3 - Effectiveness in using non-verbal communication



Picture 4 - Effectiveness in interpreting non-verbal communication

40 respondents took part in our second survey and we got information about patients' satisfaction and physician-patient interaction during medical consultations. According to our estimates 87% of patients feel comfortable if eye contact is established by the doctor in order to develop the patient-doctor relations and 92% of the respondents feel that this is a sign that the doctor pays attention to their complaints. 75% of the patients think that an eye contact should be brief but regular throughout the consultation rather than only when the patient is talking about symptoms (picture 5); 13% of the respondents note that it should be more continuous at the beginning of the consultation while listening to the patient's complaints; 10% think the eye contact should be more continuous at the end of the medical consultation; only 2% prefer the eye contact last throughout the consultation. The study also revealed that 10% of the patients objected to being touched. The remaining 90 % of the respondents thought it would be acceptable for the doctor to touch the patient on the upper back (75%) and on the shoulder (68%). However, the healthcare professional should take into consideration gender appropriateness, as well as the religious and cultural background of the patient.



Picture 5 - The duration of eye contact during a medical consultation

Our third survey was conducted in several polyclinics (№8, 25) and hospitals of Minsk (№3, 4) to get information about patients' satisfaction and physician-patient interaction during medical consultations. It helped to assess the agreement between doctors and patients during consultations. The research showed that the patients and physicians had a high level of agreement in their responses (table 2). Their response rates didn't differ greatly. Only 3% of patients noted lack of agreement between the patient and the physician, which was associated with a negative impression of the medical consultation received. A greater physician-patient agreement during consultations is associated with higher patient satisfaction.

Table 2. Consultation Satisfaction Questionnaire

Item	Statement		Re- sponse rate (%)	Statement		Re- sponse rate (%)
	Physician			Patient		

1.	I listened attentively to the patient.	96	I felt the physician listened attentively to me.	94
2.	We agreed on the reason for the patient's complaints.	96	We agreed on the reason for my complaints.	96
3.	The patient expressed his/her expectations from the visit.	98	I expressed my expectations from the visit.	98
4.	The patient felt his/her problems were taken seriously.	96	I felt my problems were taken seriously.	94
5.	The patient received sufficient time and attention.	98	I received sufficient time and attention.	98
6.	The patient's worries were in the focus of my attention.	98	My worries were in the focus of doctor's attention.	96
7.	The patient was greatly satisfied with the visit.	94	I was greatly satisfied with the visit.	96

Conclusions:

1. Treating patients with respect and giving them full attention is the key to effective non-verbal behavior.
2. The doctor's attention, eye contact, body movements, touch, time-consciousness encourage the patient to be open with the doctor.
3. Positive, effective, and sensitive non-verbal behavior helps to strengthen the doctor-patient bond.
4. Being able to read the patient's body language and facial expressions makes the doctor's work more efficient.
5. Nonverbal behavior is an important diagnostic tool increasing the physician's comprehension of words spoken or thoughts left unsaid.

A. I. Radkovskaya

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN HEALTHCARE

Tutor senior teacher I.Y. Abedkovskaya

Department of Foreign Languages

Belarusian State Medical University, Minsk

Літаратура

1. Andersen, P. Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions/ P. Andersen. - Waveland Press, 2007.
2. Ekman, P. Emotions Revealed: Recognizing Face and Feelings to Improve Communication and Emotional Life/ P. Ekman. - Macmillan, 2007.
3. Bakić-Mirić, N. M. Successful Doctor-Patient Communication and Rapport Building as the Key Skills of Medical Practice / N. M. Bakić-Mirić. // Facta Universitatis Series: Medicine and Biology. – 2008. - № 2. - P. 74 – 79.